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DISARMAMENT COMMISSION

VERBATIM RECORD OF THE ONE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-THIRD MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 28 December 1990, at 11 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. SUTRESNA (Indonesia)

- Organizational matters

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The meeting was called to order at 11.45 a.m.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

The CHAIRMAN: At our last meeting, held on 19 December, we considered and took decisions on the issues related to the election of officers for 1991 and the appointment of Chairmen of the subsidiary bodies. However, we did not conclude our work on those issues at that meeting, in particular the appointment of Chairmen for Working Groups III and IV upon the endorsement of regional groups concerned.

With regard to the specific person endorsed for the chairmanship of Working Group II, on nuclear issues, the delegation of Egypt has informed me that Ambassador Amre Moussa, Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations in New York, will assume the chairmanship of that Working Group.

As to the other two Working Groups - Working Groups III and IV - I understand that consultations are still under way among and between the regional groups concerned on the endorsement of the chairmanships of those Working Groups.

However, I should point out that paragraph 4 (1) of the adopted "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission" (A/CN.10/137) states, inter alia:

> "The allocation of the agenda items to the four subsidiary bodies and the appointment of the chairmen for these subsidiary bodies should be decided at the organizational session of the Commission, taking into account the principle of equitable geographical distribution."

Therefore, the Commission must accomplish this task at its 1990 organizational session.

In view of the present situation, I should like to propose that the 1990 organizational session be extended by one more plenary meeting in the near future under the chairmanship of the current Chairman of the Commission for 1990, in order

(The Chairman)

to accomplish the entrusted tasks and to conclude the 1990 organizational session. It has to be pointed out, however, that such an extension is due to the extraordinary circumstances and should not set a precedent for the future.

If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to extend the 1990 organizational session by one more plenary meeting in the near future.

It was so decided.

Mr. JANDL (Austria): We have just decided on an extension of the 1990 organizational session into the first weeks of 1991. My delegation believes that in the light of the very delicate situation we are in, this is certainly the best solution we could achieve.

To my delegation, the phrase "1990 organizational session" makes it clear that it should have been terminated and all the questions to be solved by it should have been settled by the end of December 1990. Thus the extension we have just agreed upon is to be seen as an extremely exceptional case that should not set any precedent.

I should like here to state that although no fixed period for the extension has been put on paper, the extension we have just agreed upon should relate only to the very first weeks of January 1991 and should, it is to be hoped, be terminated then.

There are two reasons for this: first, as I have mentioned, given the extremely exceptional nature of the case, if we make such a deviation from the normal and foreseen practice, it should be as short as possible; secondly, the Austrian delegation and the Chairman elect, Ambassador Hohenfellner, firmly believe it is necessary to give the respective Chairmen of the Working Groups enough time for preparation of their task in order to ensure the prospective outcome of the 1991 substantive session. This will, of course, necessitate opportunities for the Chairman of the respective Working Groups to start their consultations and other kinds of preparations at an early date. Also in this respect, we should like to see the matter pending resolved as quickly as possible.

This is understood in the light of the reform package in document A/CN.10/137, entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission", the aim of which was, inter alia, to allow for better preparation of the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. That is why the reform paper clearly

(Mr. Jandl, Austria)

provides for the Chairmen of the Working Groups to be elected at the organizational session, which, according to the rules of procedure followed by the Commission, is always held during the month of December. The provision to which I have referred is to be found in section 4, subparagraph 1, of document A/CN.10/137.

The CHAIRMAN: I fully concur with the points made by the representative of Austria. If consultations within the regional groups concerned could be held even before the end of the year, or perhaps in the first few days of the new year, I should be most happy to convene the Commission to endorse the decision by the regional groups concerned, but I think we all realize that most delegations will still be away from New York in the first week of the year. But now that we shall have this amendment conference, which will start on 8 January, I hope the delegations most concerned with our present difficulties will come back to New York and that that will enable the regional groups concerned to meet and make the decision expected of them.

I hope I shall be able to convene a meeting in the first weeks of January.

I wish to thank members for being present. I know it is exceptional for us to have to come to the United Nations at the end of December.

The next meeting of the Disarmament Commission will be announced in the Journal.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.